

A
CRITICK *no* WIT:
OR,
REMARKS
ON
Mr. DENNIS's
Late PLAY, called the
Invader of his Country.

In a LETTER from a School-Boy,
to the Author.

Fronti nulla Fides.

L O N D O N:
Printed for J. ROBERTS in *Warwick-*
Lane. 1720. .

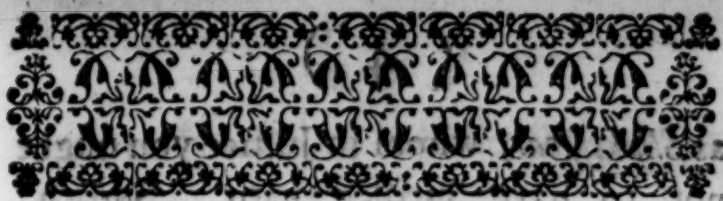
(Price Six-pence.)

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Printed and Sold by
J. & I. E. a School-Boy
LONDON:
Printed for J. Roberts in Warwick.
Jama. 1750.
(Price Six-pence)



TO
Mr. DENNIS.

SIR,

B EING a mighty Lover of *Plays*,
I very often read 'em at my
leisure Hours; and *Saturday* you
know being half a *Holiday*, I
last *Saturday*, after I had finished my
Exercise, went to a *Bookseller's Shop*
where I am acquainted, and there I had
an Opportunity of seeing *CORIOLA-
NUS Burlesqu'd*, (for I can tell you I
have read *Shakespeare*) and was so un-
commonly entertain'd (tho' not divert-
ed) that I can't help making some *Re-
marks* on the Injustice you have done
the Writings of so celebrated a Poet

as *Shakespear*, whom in Justice you ought not to have meddled with. 'Sdeath! Sir! do you take *Shakespear* for a *Bailiffe*, that you treat him in so contemptible a manner! To dress him thus in a *Fool's Coat*, and cover him with Mud, worse than there is in all the *Mint Ditches*! Why, what an execrable Fellow art thou! that not content to affront with thy ill Nature all the Living Poets, but must wrong the Dead with thy Folly and Ignorance — I own, 'tis a Piece of Presumption in one so young as I am, to pretend to *Remark* upon any Thing; but, as I believe Persons of better Capacity wont think it worth their while to write on so trifling a *Subject* as Mr. *Dennis*; and being unwilling you shou'd go without the Treatment you have deserv'd from all who know you; I mean, to be expos'd and ridicul'd; (tho' by the way, your Works, were they to be read, wou'd do it sufficiently) I shall venture to proceed, being assur'd, the worst that can be said of me is, that I have as much Ill-nature,

nature, Ignorance, Impudence, and Self-sufficiency, as Mr. *Dennis*:

Your Dedication shou'd first fall under my Notice, but the noble Name you have prefix'd to it, makes me forbear to touch on That, lest unwillingly, I shou'd offend. But your insolent, impudent *Advertisement*, before the *Epilogue*, must not escape me. Cou'd any one, but a Fellow abandon'd to Gratitude and Honesty, fly in the Face of those very Gentlemen, who had good Nature enough, even in Contradiction to their own Judgment (as well as the Town's) at the Expence of their Time and Labour, to endeavour to serve a Fellow to whom the World is justly a Foe: Nay, I have been credibly inform'd, that when your Third Night fail'd, thro' the Weakness of the Play, your own known want of Merit, and the just Resentment of the Town, you have so often insolently abus'd; they generously offer'd to take that Night upon themselves, and give you a Month's Time to make
your

your Interest; and then, to take what Night, or Play, you thought fit. The base Return you have made for so unmerited a Favour, can be compar'd to nothing so properly as the Villany of *Ennus*, who conspir'd against the Life of the generous *Esop*, for no other Reason than his preserving the Monster from Poverty and Misery: Or to the Snake's stinging the honest Countryman, who sheltered him in his Bosom from the Cold, by which otherwise the venomous Animal (your other Self) must have perished. I am a School-Boy, and therefore may be allowed School-Boys Similies. And should I make use of any other, I am afraid they would surpass your Understanding. But as the Town is sufficiently acquainted with your Rancour, Falshood, and Ill-nature, 'tis needless for me to continue on this Subject any longer. So now for your Play,

RE.



REMARKS

ON THE

Invader of his Country, &c.

FIRST, I shall endeavour to shew the Faults and Absurdities in this *Tragedy*.

Secondly, That you neither have Genius or Judgment to be the Author of any Dramatick Piece whatever *.

I shan't venture to touch on the Nature of your Heroe, since *Shakespear* has thought him a proper Subject for Tragedy, but rather shew him in his modern Dress, a Hero fit for the *Bear-Garden*. *Shakespear* makes him a Soldier, you a Bully ; and any one that knows you, would believe you had

* Vid. *Your own Remarks on Cato*.

formed *Coriolanus's* Manners after Your own, bating his Courage, which is a Virtue I never heard you were fam'd for. I could say a great deal more of this ill-natured Stuff; but those who did not know the Truth of it, might think I had been your Pupil, which I assure you is a Scandal I would avoid: I shall therefore conclude this, and proceed to what I first intended.

ACT I. Page 4 and 5. *Cominius* the Roman General, every Moment in Danger of being attacked by the *Volscians*, who just before had put him and his Troops to Flight, upon the Approach of *Martius* recovers new Courage, seems assured of Victory, and asks him with triumphant Joy,

Com. What God propitious to the Fate of Rome,
Wrought thy Deliverance so very soon?
So unexpectedly?

Martius indeed, who knew the Enemy were at their Heels, and thought it no Time to ask Questions, very pertinently answers,
Mar.

Mar. I want both Time and Breath to inform you now.

Yet *Cominius*, like a prudent General, instead of preparing to receive the Assaults of the conquering *Volscians*, goes on with his Interrogatives.

C. Thou Flower of Warriors, how fares Titus Largius ?

It seems the Want of Breath was not a sufficient Excuse, he was in a Vein of Curiosity, and must be satisfy'd; and *Martius*, like a complaisant Person, (without Breath) gives the following Description:

*As the Man fares who does the Work of Fate,
Condemning some to Death, and some to Exile;
Ransoming some, some pitying, threat'ning others,
Holding Corioli in the Name of Rome,
E'en like a fawning Grey Hound in the Leash,
To let them slip at Pleasure;
But see he comes himself t' inform you further.*

Upon which, *Titus Largius* immediately enters, very seasonably indeed for

B

Mar-

Martius ; for by this time his Breath must needs have fail'd him. To whom he had left the Care of *Corioli*, how he got there so soon, or what Business he had there at all, you never tell us ; except that it was to prove *Martius* a Horse, and himself and Afs, in the following Lines.

*Oh, General ! see there the noble Steed,
For we are but the bare Caparison.
Oh ! I have Miracles to entertain thee
Transcending all Belief, surpassing all Example.
Behold that wonderful, that godlike Man,
Who, when he was enclosed among Ten Thousand,
Drove them, like some Divinity, before him ;
Infusing mortal Terrors thro' their Souls :
Then to our Romans open'd wide the Gates,
And let in mighty Ruin on 'em all.*

Now , what Business this Bombast Speech, and several other Speeches that follow, have here ; or how *Aufidius* all this while comes to have good Manners enough not to interrupt 'em, you leave us in the Dark ; for it seems he was so near, that the very Moment *Martius* goes off

(11)

off the Stage, the Fight begins; the *Romans* conquer; the *Volsicians* fly; and *Cominius*, according to his accustomed Conduct, instead of pursuing 'em, draws his Army together on the Stage, and falls again to his old Trade of Speeching, which, it seems, he lik'd much better than fighting.

P. 10 and 11. Com. *As Caius thou art brave
beyond Example;*

*Thy Soul's possess'd of every peaceful Virtue;
Temperate, Chaste, observant of the Laws.*

Yet in three Lines after,

Com. *Thou hast a Soul too haughty and severe
For one that lives in a free State.*

Now, if this is not as errant Non-sence and Contradiction as ever School-Boy was whip'd for, I am mistaken: How that Soul can be possess'd of every peaceful Virtue, that is too haughty and severe to live in a free State, I am afraid requires a Capacity brighter than yours to make out. I am sure in our School, we never look upon Pride, Insolence and

Severity, as Marks of Peace; or even think him temperate, who can't command his Passions. Perhaps you think it sufficient that *Martius* was no Drunkard, (tho' by the Way, you have nowhere told us of his Sobriety,) and how observant he was of the Laws, I shall show presently, where you make him kick the free Citizens of *Rome*, beat the very Tribunes, and oppose his own *Caprice* against the received Customs of his Country; but I fancy, Mr. *Critick*, you had a Mind to prove your self a *Wit*, by showing you had an ill Memory, and forgot in one Speech what you wrote the Minute before.

But your Faults are too many, and my Time too short, to Remark upon every Particular; I shall therefore skip from this Act to the Scene of the Citizens in the Second, which any one who reads will guess to be your own.

I am ashamed to find here that instead of chusing a Consul for *Rome*, you are
 chusing

chusing Members of Parliament in *Covent-Garden*, and making the contending Parties there, *Whig* and *Tory*; and I never in any *Roman* History yet read of their Milk-scores. Pray tell me who that Sect of People were in *Rome*, who were too proud and saucy to pull off their Hats to the Gods? (*N. B.* they wore no Hats in *Rome*) Who this *Sempronius* was you make all this Bustle about; and what History mentions his travelling into *Egypt* with young *Tarquin*, who, if I mistake not, was dead long before *Coriolanus* was born? And what Author writes of the *Romans* being about to change their own Gods for *Egyptian* Gods; and whether any Person, who pretends he writes Tragedy for Improvement and the Good of his Country, can think that these Speeches,

P. 24. When a Man has his Gods in his Guts, he is unfit to breath in Human Society;

——— *No God-Eater;*
are fit to be the Sport of a Mob-Scene,
to gain a Clap from the Upper Gallery.
You

You seem to be very little acquainted with the Tempers of the *Roman* Citizens to make your *Drawcanfir* beat and abuse 'em at the very Moment they were about to elect him *Consul*, and they to take no Notice of it ; and yet, presently after to have 'em banish him for barely affronting their Tribunes.

ACT III. I come now to shew (as I before promis'd) how temperate *Coriolanus* was, and how observant of the Laws.

P. 32. Cor. See where the Tribunes of the People come,

*The many-headed Monsters common Tongue,
Whom I despise and hate.*

And presently after, when one of the Tribunes charges him as a Criminal in the following Lines.

Sic. Go call the People, in whose Name my self
Arrest thee as a traiterous Innovator ;

*A publick Foe to Rome; obey I charge thee,
And follow to thy Answer.*

He, to show his pacifick Spirit, and Respect to the Magistrates, answers in the following submissive Manner.

Hence, old Goat

*Hence, rotten Thing, or I shall shake thy Bones
Out of thy Garments.*

Now how far this Behaviour may agree with the Character of *Coriolanus* in general, I shall not undertake to determine; but how well it consists with the Character given by *Cominius* of him, P. 10.

*Thy Soul's possest of every peaceful Virtue,
Temperate, Chaste, observant of the Laws.*

I believe is obvious to the meanest Capacity; but my Want of Time obliges to have done with *Coriolanus* at *Rome*, and show him now at *Antium*.

ACT IV. I find you have given your
doubty *Hero* such a Knack of Kicking
and

and Cuffing, that he can't forbear it even in the very House, and on the Domesticks of that very Person to whom he is come a Suitor for Protection and Revenge against his Enemies: And it seems the *Volscian* Servants had either a great deal of Cowardise or Complaisance to Strangers, to suffer *Martius* to beat them all round without any Resistance. I fancy, was Mr. *Dennis* to go into a Nobleman's Hall, now a Days, and take such a Method, he would go near to be kicked in his Turn, and perhaps have his Bones broke into the Bargain. But I suppose this Scene was thrust in not so much to magnify your Hero, as to introduce some low Characters you should have Occasion for in a following Scene, *P.* 56. to vent some of the most impudent, scurrilous, nonsensical Ribaldry that ever was writ, and scarce fit to be represented on a *Bartholomew-Fair* Stage. Pray, good Mr. *Dennis*, wise Mr. *Critick*! you that all your Life have show'd your Teeth, and bark'd at the Works of Authors too good to

to be nam'd where you are concern'd; what Footmen did you ever read of that loll'd in their gilt Chariots at *Antium*, (where, I believe such Things were never heard of) or does the Scene lie there or in *London*? And if you are that Patriot, that Lover of your Country you so often in your Writings boasted your self to be, do Justice to your Country, and expose publickly those Persons you seem to glance at in the following Speech, P. 57.

“ I will use the State as a Sharper does
 “ his Bubble; I will flatter and cajole it
 “ egregiously; express flaming Zeal for
 “ its Service; talk of nothing but publick
 “ Spirit and the Love of my Country;
 “ but at the same Time I will cheat my
 “ dear Country most damnably, yet rail
 “ most vehemently at any one who has
 “ it in his Power to cheat it more
 “ than my self. If I can but fill my
 “ own Coffers, I care not one Farthing
 “ if my dear Country is Five Hundred
 C Mil-

" Millions in Debt, and a Bankrupt past
 " Recovery.

That would be indeed to prove your
 self a Friend to your Country, and
 might perhaps get you another Place
 to sell, as I think you did your For-
 mer; but as I hope there are no such
 Persons in Being, I rather think you
 wrote that Scene only to digest your
 Venom, and to throw Reflections on
 Men in Power.

I forgot to take Notice by the Way,
 that where you make *Martius* and *Aufi-
 dius* meet, as soon as ever *Martius* has
 discover'd himself (p. 52.) to oblige *Au-
 fidius* to assist him in his Revenge upon
 his ungrateful Countrymen, he speaks
 to him thus :

*Tullus ! thou see'st me here a banish'd Man,
 Hoop'd out of Rome by vile accursed Slaves,
 Permitted by our Dastard Nobles, who
 Have all forsaken me ; for which, may Fortune
 And every Guardian God of Rome, forsake
 them.*

Tul.

*Tullus, I come to make a noble Barter with thee ;
Give me Revenge, I'll give thee Victory.*

A noble Barter indeed, and well worthy *Aufidius's* Acceptance ; nay, he is so well pleased with it, that he immediately answers,

O Martius! Martius!

*Each Word thou hast spoke has weeded from my
Heart*

*A Root of antient Envy : If that Jupiter
Should from yon glittering Firmament, in
Thunder*

*Speak Things Divine, I'd not believe 'em more
Than thee, all noble Martius.*

Like a worthy Man burying his own private Malice in Regard to his Country. But it seems, after all, *Martius* has offer'd no such great Matter, he has only promised to do what *Aufidius's* Lieutenant has already done ; for in *p. 54.* where the Senators of *Antium* are trusting their old Enemy with their Troops, and joining him in equal Commission with their long tried faithful General, which

perhaps had they ever read the Story of *Sinon* and the *Trojan Horse* (this is another School-Boy's Simile,) they would never have done, for fear he should have betrayed 'em ; Before *Aufidius* and *Coriolanus* can set forth to join the Army, a Centurion enters in the following manner.

Cent. *Where's the General ?*

Auf. *What are thy Tidings ? say,*

Cent. *The Troops that marched this Evening have
already,*

*Without Resistance, passed the Roman Frontiers,
And mark'd their Way with Blood and Deva-
station ;*

*The Roman Territories in a Flame,
With which the Welkin glows ; th' impartial
Sword*

*Spare neither Age, nor Sex, Degree, nor Order,
But makes promiscuous Slaughter of our Foes ;
Confusion and Dismay seize all who escape,
And all to their walled Towns for Refuge fly,
And all those Towns send Post to Rome for Suc-
cour.*

Suffetius, your Lieutenant, begs, by me,

That

*That you would haste to join th' impatient Troops,
And take th' Advantage of their eager Fire,
And of the Foes Surprise.*

Now all this was without either the *Roman* or the *Volscian* Armies knowing that *Martius* and *Aufidius* were joined. So that that could not possibly either Dismay the one, or Encourage the other: Where is then the Victory *Martius* has so given? What has he done, or can do, more than the *Volscians* could do without him?

When *Cominius*, upon the first News of *Martius's* being joined with the *Volscians*, meets the affrighted *Plebeians*: he, I suppose, to terrify them who were sufficiently frightened already, says, Page 60.

*He leads 'em like a Being
Made by some nobler Artist than meer Nature,
That forms Man perfecter, and shapes him better.*

This is an odd sort of a Metaphor, and I think would seem to intimate Dame Nature to be a Bungler; and that
for

for a Man to be a great General (for that seems to be the only distinguishable Quality of *Coriolanus*) it requires he should be made by some nobler Artist than mere Nature, formed perfecter, and shaped better than it was in her Power to do. Pray who was this wonderful Artist ? Did he lend Nature a helping Hand in the making of *Hercules*, *Thesens*, *Achilles*, *Alexander*, and the rest of the ancient Heroes ? or did you coin him purposely for the use of your Favourite *Coriolanus* ?

All the Regions

*Wish Chearfulness revolt ; they who resist
Are mark'd for valiant Ignorance,
And perish constant Fools.*

Happy *Romans*, who when all your Regions chearfully revolted from you, had still some left to make Resistance : 'Tis not possible for me to read this Speech, without remembering a Verse of an old Song, which because perhaps you never heard, I will set down here.

Three

*Three Children sliding on the Ice,
Upon a Summer's Day,
It so fell out, they All fell in,
The Rest they ran away.*

Dear Sir *Tremendous*, could any one who pretends to be a Critick, and a Regulator of others Works, make such palpable Blunders in his own? I assure you you oblige me to agree with you in one saying of yours in your Dedication, which I believe I shan't do in many, That nothing comparable to this has been produced at the *Theatre in Drury-Lane*, since those People had the Management of it.

ACT V, Page 63.

*Auf. The Soul of Martius was the Spirit
Invigorating all; now he has left them,
The whole vast Body is become a Lump
Of Lifeless and half animated Clay.*

Lifeless and half animated! I am sure should any Boy in our School, who reads but *Erasmus*, have said that, I know what his Punishment would have been.

been. I thought to be animated, was enliven'd; but perhaps you have got a Knack of concealing nonsensical Contradictions; if so, would you write a Treatise of it, you might perhaps succeed better in that than any thing you have yet undertaken; and I don't doubt but you would oblige a Number of People.

P. 74. After *Martius's* Mother and Wife have by their moving Perswasions wrought upon him to return with the conquering Troops back to *Antium*, and to spare his Country, upon *Aufidius's* charging him with his Breach of Faith to the *Volscians*, who had intrusted him with their Powers, and in particular with his Gratitude to him in the following Speech.

To me, ungrateful Man!

*Who took you in with open Arms, but I?
A supplicating Exile, and a Vagabond,
Fallen below Pity; nay, below Contempt;
Who gave his Honour to the Volscian Lords,
That you inviolably should be theirs?*

And

*And rais'd you up to more than former Glory,
 And even to enviy'd Greatness; to the Power
 Of taking a Revenge as ample as thy Wish.
 Now, what's the great Return you make for this?*

Coriolanus immediately answers,

*Such a Return as none but I could make ;
 Such a Return as not Ten Days ago
 Wou'd have been Phrenzy in the proudest Vol-
 scian
 To hope or to expect. I infus'd Spirit thro' your abject Troops,
 Gave 'em a Taste of deathless Victory ;
 First shew'd 'em that the Romans can be con-
 quer'd.*

Now all this seems very strange to me ; I am afraid your Heroe is troubled with an ill Memory as well as your self. Was this the first Time the Romans had been conquered ? Pray what happen'd to *Cominius* in the First Act ? When speaking to the *Roman* Troops, he says,

D

Light-

*Light'ning confound them ; had they shown in
Battle*

*But half the Fury of this headlong Flight,
The Victory had past Dispute been ours.*

*With what resistless Eagerness they ran,
And with what Slaughter curs'd Aufidius fol-
low'd?*

Now I always thought when any Army ran away, they might be said to be beaten, or conquer'd: I think the Words have much the same Meaning. And pray what says *Aufidius* in the Fourth Act, when he is speaking to the Senators of *Antium* concerning *Martius*?

*Life hates not Death so much as I do Martius,
Yet I'll do Justice to the Worth I hate ;
Even when his Country had an Army rais'd,
What was that Army when-e'er he was absent ?
He was the Soul of all their warlike Enter-
prizes.*

*Who beat the Troops which I in Person led ?
Was it Cominius, Rome's Commander ? No.
I drove Cominius and his Troops before me,
As Whirlwinds drive the Dust.*

So

So that it seems very plain that the *Romans* could be conquer'd, tho' *Martius* could not; and it is sufficient for *Martius* not to fight against the *Volscians*, for them to gain the Victory, without ever troubling him to draw his Sword in their Behalf: And his saying he infus'd Spirit thro' the abject Troops, does not seem to agree with *Suffetius's* desiring the General to haste to join the Troops, and take the Advantage of their eager Fire.

But I begin to be as weary of this Subject as the Town is of you, and so shall make haste to have done. *Aufidius* and *Coriolanus* have scolded long enough, 'tis time for 'em to make an End. Well, to Tilting they go, and *Aufidius* falls. Now how natural 'tis for two Generals to fight at Noon-Day at the Head of their Army, without any Interruption from the Soldiers, I leave to any one to determine. I am sure this Passage seems as absurd to me,

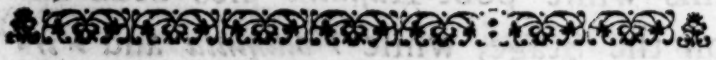
as any you so severely remarked upon in *Cato*. I would fain ask you, if the Duke of *M——b* and Prince *Eugene* had happened to have had any Dispute in *Flanders*, whether you believe the *English* Army would have stood idle Lookers on, and let them cut one another's Throats? Or whether the first Subaltern who had seen 'em, would not have secured 'em, and prevented their Disputes, till their Passions perhaps were cooler? I don't know how you will reconcile this (unless you make the two Heroes go behind a Hedge to fight) any more than you will the making the Conspirators come in one by one to kill *Coriolanus*. If their General, *Aufidius*, who thought the Death of *Martius* necessary for the Safety of the *Volscians*, had Honour and Courage enough, Hand to Hand, to attack him, yet that every petty Conspirator should venture singly to Combat with a Man of *Coriolanus's* Character, I measure seems very inconsistent; but I suppose this was done
to

to shew your *Sampson* could slay as many at his Death, as in his Life. All this while poor *Aufidius* lies dead upon the Stage, while *Volumnia* and *Virgilia* are bewailing, and *Cominius* speaking it on the Death of *Coriolanus*, without so much as a Candle-Snuffer to fetch him off; (one of your own Remarks on *Cato*;) and at the End of those Remarks, you say *Aristotle* tells us, that there ought to be no Incident in a Tragedy, but what ought to be reasonable. And *Baileau* tells us, after him,

La Scène demande une exacte raison.

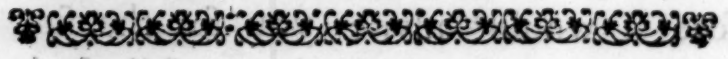
Now how far you have been from observing those Rules, the meanest Capacity may perceive. And therefore I would advise you for the future, not to be so ready to fall foul on the Works of other Writers, since in your own so many Faults seem obvious even to a School-Boy. Farewell.

Just



Just Publish'd,

A Bold Challenge to the Whole College of Physicians: Or, A Defence of those Practitioners in Physick, commonly call'd Quacks, namely, Dr. M---tin, Dr. M---ve, Dr. V---k---s, Dr. W---t---s, Dr. T---l---g, Dr. Th---n---ll, Dr. Anodyne Necklace. Cum multis alijs, both Doctors, and Doctresses. Likewise a Vindication of many Eminent Pifs-Prophets, Astrologers, Conjurers, both Male and Female, from the Aspersions cast upon them by a late Author. Printed for J. Roberts in Warwick-Lane. Price One Shilling.



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